

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1188

As Reported by House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to negotiating state patrol officer wages and wage-related matters.

Brief Description: Negotiating state patrol officer wages and wage-related matters.

Sponsors: Representatives Murray, Woods, Conway, O'Brien, Ericks, Condotta, Wood, Simpson, Campbell, P. Sullivan, Lovick, Williams, Chase, Hinkle and Ormsby.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 1/24/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Makes wage issues, other than certain employee benefits, a subject of bargaining for Washington State Patrol officers, and requires bargaining for wages and wage-related matters with the Governor's designee and bargaining non-wage matters with the Washington State Patrol.
- States that an arbitration award is not binding on the Legislature and, if the Legislature does not approve funding for the wage and wage-related matters, is not binding on the state or the Washington State Patrol.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Conway, Chair; Wood, Vice Chair; Condotta, Ranking Minority Member; Crouse, Hudgins, McCoy and Sump.

Staff: Chris Cordes (786-7103).

Background:

Employees of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions of the state bargain their wages and working conditions under the Public Employees' Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). The Washington State Patrol is also subject to the PECBA as the public employer of its appointed officers.

Under the PECBA, the employer and exclusive bargaining representative have a mutual obligation to negotiate in good faith over specified mandatory subjects of bargaining:

grievance procedures and personnel matters, including wages, hours, and working conditions. With respect to negotiations between the Washington State Patrol and its appointed officers, the subjects of bargaining include wage-related matters, but negotiations are prohibited over rates of pay, wage levels, or matters relating to retirement benefits, health care, or other employee insurance benefits. If wage-related provisions are entered into before the Legislature approves the necessary funding, then these provisions must be conditioned on subsequent approval of the funds.

State Patrol officers and certain other law enforcement officers and fire fighters are considered "uniformed personnel." To resolve bargaining disputes involving these uniformed personnel, the PECBA requires binding interest arbitration if negotiations for a contract reach impasse and cannot be resolved through mediation.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

For the officers of the Washington State Patrol, subjects of bargaining include all wage and wage-related matters. However, negotiations over retirement benefits, health care, or other employee insurance benefits continue to be prohibited.

For the purpose of bargaining with state patrol officers, the state is the employer. When negotiating:

- wages and wage-related matters, the state is represented by the Governor or Governor's designee appointed under the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002; and
- nonwage-related matters, the state is represented by the Washington State Patrol.

When negotiating wages and wage-related matters, the Governor's designee must consult with a subcommittee of the Joint Employment Relations Committee (JCER). This subcommittee will consist of the JCER leadership members and the chairs and ranking minority members of the Senate Transportation Committee and the House Transportation Committee.

If an impasse in negotiations results in an arbitration award, that decision is not binding on the Legislature. If the Legislature does not approve the funds necessary to implement the wage and wage-related matters of an arbitrated collective bargaining agreement, the arbitration decision is not binding on the state or the Washington State Patrol.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill corrects the reference to the name of the Senate Transportation Committee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 2005.

Testimony For: The state patrol troopers have been collectively bargaining for over 20 years, but this bargaining has not included full bargaining over wage issues. In 2002, the troopers were not included in the new wage bargaining law for state employees. This leaves the troopers as one of a few groups of state employees that do not have the right to bargain over wages. The agency supports these bargaining rights, although the bifurcated bargaining required by the bill may add some additional costs.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Rick Jensen and Bob Thurston, Washington State Patrol Troopers Association; and Jeff DeVere, Washington State Patrol.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.